

How to Register Your Own Domain Name

Get a domain like yourname.com for your website

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If you have a web site, you should seriously consider registering your own domain name. A domain name is a name like "thesitewizard.com" or "thefreecountry.com", which you can use to refer to your website. Note that you do not have to be a company or organisation ("organization" in [US English](#)) to register a domain name. Any individual can do it too.

Importance of a Domain Name

There are a number of good reasons for having a domain name:

- If you ever change your web host, your domain name goes with you. Your regular visitors or customers who knew your site name as www.thesitewizard.com (for example) would not have to be informed about a change of web address (also known as "URL"). They would simply type your domain name and they'd be brought to your new site.
- If you are a business, a domain name gives you credibility. Few people will be willing to do business with a company that does not have its own domain name.
- If you get a domain name that describes your company's business or name, people can remember the name easily and can return to your site without having to consult their documents. In fact, if you get a good name that describes your product or service, you might even get people who were trying their luck by typing "www.yourproductname.com" in their browser.
- If you want good sponsors (advertisers) for your website, a domain name is usually helpful. It tends to give your website an aura of respectability.

Registration Overview

Getting a domain name involves registering the name you want with an organisation called ICANN through a domain name registrar. For example, if you choose a name like "example.com", you will have to go to a registrar, pay a registration fee that costs around US\$10 to US\$35 for that name. That will give you the right to the name for a year, and you will have to [renew it](#) annually for (usually) the same amount per annum.

Some web hosts will register it and pay for the name for free (usually only the commercial web hosts), while others will do it for you but you'll have to foot the registrar fees.

My personal preference is to register the name directly with a domain name registrar rather than through my web host. I've heard stories, in the past, of less-than-reputable web hosts that

registered the domain under their own name, making them the owner of the domain rather than you (although I don't know if such web hosts still exist today). Registering with a domain name registrar allows me to make sure that I am registered as the owner, the administrative and technical contacts. Being the owner is vital — if someone else places himself as the owner (such as your web host), he can always decide to charge you some exorbitant fee for the use of the name later, and there is little you can do. The various other contacts are less vital, but may still play important roles, depending on your registrar. For example, for some registrars, the administrative contact's approval is required before a domain name is transferred out of a web host (or at least, it used to be). If he/she cannot be contacted, the technical contact is used.

Domain names disappear extremely fast. Many people claim that all the good domain names are gone. I doubt that — but it is probably true that most good domain names that are descriptive of products and services have been taken. If you want a domain name for your site, I suggest you act now, or face the anguish of having lost that name later. After all, US\$10 (more or less) for a year's ownership of the name is pretty cheap when you realise that you're securing a good name for your website.

Step By Step Instructions

If you want to register a domain name, here's what you need to do. Please read it all before acting.

- Think of a few good domain names that you'd like to use. It won't do to think of only one — it might already be taken (it probably is!). You can find some tips on choosing a good domain name from my article, [Tips on Choosing a Domain Name](http://www.thesitewizard.com/archive/domainname.shtml), at <http://www.thesitewizard.com/archive/domainname.shtml>

There's more to it than meets the eye.

- You will need either a credit card or a PayPal account to pay for the domain. This is a requirement of most if not all registrars. It will allow you to claim and get the domain name immediately on application. This is not an option (unfortunately).
- If you already have a [web host](#), obtain from them the names of their primary and secondary nameservers. Don't worry if you don't understand what these things mean. Just save the information somewhere. The information can usually be obtained from their FAQs or other documentation on their site, usually under a category like "domain name" or "DNS" or "domain name transfer" and the like. If you can't find it, email them. You'll need the information to [point your domain name to your website](#) after you buy your domain. Having said that, if you don't have a web host yet, don't worry. Just read on.
- If you do not have a web host, you can always allow the registrar to [park your domain name](#) at a temporary website specially set up for you. This way you can quickly secure your domain name before it's too late and still take your time to set up the other aspects of your site. As far as I can tell, most registrars (or probably all) automatically park your domain by default whether you ask them to or not, so if this is your situation, you probably don't have to do anything special to get it done. Some of those registrars also

provide you with a free email address at your own domain name while it is parked at their site, like `sales@example.com` (where "example.com" is your domain).

List of Domain Name Registrars

There are numerous domain name registrars. Listed below are just a few, along with my comments, if I know anything about them. Note that the domain name industry is highly competitive, with prices wildly fluctuating throughout the year, every year, so it's impossible to really mention accurate prices below unless I spend all my time updating this page. Please check their sites for the latest rates. (Note: all prices below are in US dollars.)

- [World's Largest Registrar - GoDaddy.com](#) — This extremely popular registrar (probably the biggest today) offers .com domain names for \$9.99 (plus 20 cents) per year (or \$6.99 plus 20 cents if you transfer from another registrar). They have a web interface to manage your domains, free web redirection (where people who visit your domain will get transferred to another web address of your choice), free starter web page, free [parked page](#) or free "for sale" page, and an optional private domain registration where your domain is registered in the name of a proxy company. They offer .com, .us, .biz, .info, .net, .org, .ws, .name, .tv, .co.uk, .me.uk and .org.uk, etc. Note that (as with all registrars) the exact price varies depending on which domain you are registering (for example some domain suffixes are more expensive than others). Both credit card and PayPal payments are accepted.
- [Namecheap](#) — This company provides .com domains for \$10.69 (plus 18 cents) per year (\$9.69 if you transfer from other registrars). Along with your domain, you get free email forwarding, free web redirection (where anyone going to your domain is automatically directed to another address of your choice), free [domain name parking](#), etc. For the first year (or at least, at the time I checked their prices), you can also have their WhoisGuard (where your particulars are masked from public view) for free. They have a wide variety of domain name extensions available, including .net, .org, .biz, .info, .us, .co.uk, .co, .de, etc. You can use either a credit card or PayPal for your purchases.
- [1&1 Internet](#) — This is primarily a large web host that is also a domain name registrar. You are charged \$6.99 for .com, .org, .net, .us domains. They also offer .info domains for \$0.99 (first year only) and .biz at \$8.99. The fee includes private domain registration, which means that your particulars are hidden from public view (done by registering the domain in the name of a proxy company). You also get a free email account, DNS management, domain forwarding and masking, and a starter website with each domain. Both credit card and PayPal payments are accepted by this registrar.
- [Dotster.com](#) — This fairly popular registrar provides fairly cheap domain prices (\$15.75 plus 20 cents per domain), a convenient web interface to manage your domains, an optional privacy facility where your domain name is registered in the name of a proxy company, etc. They offer .com, .net, .org, .biz, .info, .us, .ca, .tv, .name, .cc, .de, .sr, .md, .co.uk, .us.com domains, etc. If you're transferring a domain here from other registrars, the price is even cheaper (\$6.99 plus 20 cents). Both credit card and PayPal payments are accepted here.

In addition, as mentioned earlier, a number of [commercial web hosts](#) will give you a free domain name if you are hosting with them, as will many (if not all) of the registrars above.

After You Register Your Domain Name

If you're not sure what to do after you register your domain name, please read the [How to Make / Create Your Own Website: The Beginner's A-Z Guide](#).

Conclusion

Once you've decided, you should not procrastinate. I've lost more than one domain name by procrastinating (I lost the latest one by only one day). After all, at the price you're paying, it works out to be less than \$1 a month for the majority of the registrars.

<http://www.thesitewizard.com/archive/registerdomain.shtml>

<http://www.thesitewizard.com/gettingstarted/startwebsite.shtml>

